

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS REPORT

Prospective Plantings for 2004
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February Livestock Slaughter
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Louisiana Prospective Plantings For 2004

As of March 1, 2004, Louisiana's farmers intended to plant more acreage to cotton, rice, soybeans and sweet potatoes this year than last year. Corn, sorghum and wheat acreages are expected to decrease from 2003.

These prospective planting intentions reflect economic and weather conditions as of March 1, 2004. Actual plantings could shift upward or downward based on conditions for the rest of the planting season. Planted acreage estimates will be updated in a June 1 survey and released by the National Agricultural Statistics Service on June 30, 2004.

Soybean planted acreage is expected to increase 29 percent from last year, to 980,000 acres.

Cotton growers intend to plant 600,000 acres, up 75,000 acres (14 percent) from a year ago.

Rice planted acreage is expected to increase to 530,000 acres, up 16 percent from last year. Long grain varieties are expected to account for 510,000 acres. Growers intend to plant 20,000 acres of medium grain varieties, the same as in 2003.

Corn planted acreage is expected to total 450,000 acres, down 13 percent from a year ago.

Grain Sorghum intentions indicate acreage will total 100,000 acres, down 70,000 acres from a year ago.

Sweet Potato plantings, at 20,000 acres, are expected to be up 5 percent from a year ago.

Winter wheat seeded last fall is estimated at 150,000 acres, down 5,000 acres from 2003.

An estimated 400,000 acres of hay will be harvested, up 5 percent from last year.

United States Prospective Plantings

Soybean growers intend to plant an estimated 75.4 million acres, up 3 percent from last year. If realized, this will be the largest planted area on record and a rebound from the three year decline in acreage. Plantings in all states except South Dakota and Wisconsin are expected to equal or exceed 2003 acreage.

All Cotton plantings for 2004 are expected to total 14.4 million acres, 7 percent above last year. Upland acreage is expected to total 14.2 million acres, also a 7 percent increase. All states are expecting more acreage than last year except North Carolina and Mississippi. American-Pima cotton growers intend to increase their plantings to 226,600 acres, up 27 percent from 2003.

Rice planting intentions for 2004 are estimated at 3.26 million acres, up 8 percent from 2003 and up 1 percent from 2002. All producing states intend to plant more acres to rice in 2004 with the exception of Mississippi, with plantings expected to equal 2003 acreage.

Corn planted area for all purposes is estimated at 79.0 million acres, up fractionally from both 2002 and 2003. Expected acreage is up from last year throughout much of the Corn Belt as growers are hoping to take advantage of higher corn prices. However, most states in the Southeast and southern Great Plains are intending to decrease their corn plantings as producers are switching to soybeans and cotton due to more favorable prices relative to corn.

Sorghum acreage planted for all purposes is estimated at 8.60 million acres, down 9 percent from last year. Sorghum acres decline or remain the same as last year in all states except California, Colorado and South Dakota.

Sweet potato growers intend to plant 98,300 acres of sweet potatoes in 2004, up 3 percent from last year and 2 percent above 2002. This intended increase in planted acreage is being driven by higher prices.

All wheat planted area is expected to total 59.5 million acres in 2004, down 4 percent from 2003. Winter wheat planted area for the 2004 crop is 43.4 million acres, down 3 percent from 2003. Of the total, about 30.9 million acres are Hard Red Winter, 8.3 million acres are Soft Red Winter, and 4.2 million acres are White Winter.

Hay producers expect to harvest 63.7 million acres of all hay in 2004, up 1 percent from last year. Adequate soil moisture in most of Texas, the lower Mississippi Delta and the Great Lakes States enhanced producers expectations of harvesting more hay.

Prospective Plantings: Louisiana and United States, March 1, 2004, with 2003 Comparisons

| Crop | Louisiana | | | United States | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|------|----------|--------------------------|--------|----------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | % Change | 2003 | 2004 | % Change |
| | -----Thousand Acres----- | | | -----Thousand Acres----- | | |
| Corn | 520 | 450 | -13 | 78,736 | 79,004 | --- |
| Upland Cotton | 525 | 600 | +14 | 13,304 | 14,175 | +7 |
| Rice | 455 | 530 | +16 | 3,022 | 3,260 | +8 |
| Sorghum | 170 | 100 | -41 | 9,420 | 8,600 | -9 |
| Soybeans | 760 | 980 | +29 | 73,404 | 75,411 | +3 |
| Sweet potatoes | 19 | 20 | +5 | 95.6 | 98.3 | +3 |
| All Wheat | 155 | 150 | -3 | 61,700 | 59,462 | -4 |
| Hay ¹ | 380 | 400 | +5 | 63,342 | 63,731 | +1 |

¹Harvesting intentions.

Commercial Livestock Slaughter and Meat Production: Louisiana and United States

| Items | Louisiana | | | | | United States | | | |
|---------------|--|----------|-------|------------------|-------|--|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| | January | February | | January-February | | February | | January-February | |
| | 2004 | 2003 | 2004 | 2003 | 2004 | 2003 | 2004 | 2003 | 2004 |
| | -----Number, thousand head----- | | | | | -----Number, thousand head----- | | | |
| Cattle | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 2.7 | 2.6 | 2,569.2 | 2,427.0 | 5,577.0 | 5,003.8 |
| Calves | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 1.5 | 1.1 | 83.1 | 71.5 | 176.7 | 150.5 |
| Hogs | 1.9 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 4.7 | 4.2 | 7,686.1 | 7,886.1 | 16,485.5 | 16,675.4 |
| Sheep & Lambs | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 226.3 | 213.0 | 465.5 | 432.2 |
| | -----Total live weight, thousand pounds----- | | | | | -----Total live weight, thousand pounds----- | | | |
| Cattle | 1,131 | 1,221 | 1,147 | 2,390 | 2,278 | 3,239,557 | 2,991,682 | 7,053,862 | 6,202,256 |
| Calves | 290 | 311 | 263 | 754 | 553 | 26,312 | 24,018 | 56,076 | 50,559 |
| Hogs | 380 | 607 | 502 | 1,012 | 882 | 2,049,471 | 2,111,376 | 4,402,233 | 4,473,750 |
| Sheep & Lambs | 8 | 34 | 36 | 42 | 44 | 30,119 | 29,596 | 61,975 | 60,429 |
| | -----Average live weight, pounds----- | | | | | -----Average live weight, pounds----- | | | |
| Cattle | 867 | 868 | 883 | 885 | 876 | 1,261 | 1,233 | 1,265 | 1,241 |
| Calves | 491 | 508 | 502 | 503 | 503 | 317 | 336 | 317 | 336 |
| Hogs | 203 | 222 | 222 | 215 | 210 | 267 | 268 | 267 | 268 |
| Sheep & Lambs | 86 | 107 | 117 | 105 | 110 | 133 | 139 | 133 | 140 |
| | -----Million pounds----- | | | | | -----Million pounds----- | | | |
| Red meat | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 2.7 | 2.5 | 3,496.1 | 3,403.4 | 7,569.5 | 7,117.4 |

Louisiana Livestock Slaughter

Commercial red meat production in Louisiana during February totaled 1.3 million pounds, up 8 percent from January but 7 percent below the previous year.

There were 1,300 head of **cattle** slaughtered during February, unchanged from January but 100 head below the previous year. Average live weight was 883 pounds, up 16 pounds from the previous month and 15 pounds above February 2003. Total live weight at 1.15 million pounds, was 1 percent above the previous month but 6 percent below the previous year.

Calves slaughtered during February totaled 500 head, down 100 head from January and the previous year. Live weight averaged 502 pounds, up 11 pounds from January but 6 pounds below a year ago. Total live weight, at 263,000 pounds, was down 9 percent from January and 15 percent below the previous year.

The number of **hogs** slaughtered during February totaled 2,300 head, up 400 head from the previous month but 400 head below February 2003. Average live weight was 222 pounds, up 19 pounds from January, and the same as the previous year. Total live weight was 502,000 pounds, 32 percent above January but 17 percent below a year ago.

The number of **sheep** slaughtered during February was 300 head, up 200 head from January and the same as the previous year. Live weight averaged 117 pounds, up 31 pounds from the previous month and 10 pounds from the previous year.

United States Livestock Slaughter

Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 3.40 billion pounds in February, down 3 percent from the 3.50 billion pounds produced in February 2003.

February 2004 contained 20 weekdays (including one holiday) and four Saturdays. February 2003 contained 20 weekdays (including one holiday) and four Saturdays.

Beef production, at 1.80 billion pounds, was 7 percent below the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.43 million head, down 6 percent from February 2003. The average live weight was down 28 pounds from the previous year, at 1,233 pounds.

Veal production totaled 14.5 million pounds, 9 percent below February a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 71,500 head, down 14 percent from February 2003. The average live weight was 19 pounds above last year, at 336 pounds.

Pork production totaled 1.57 billion pounds, up 3 percent from the previous year and a new record high for February. Hogs kill totaled 7.89 million head, 3 percent above February 2003. The average live weight was 1 pound above the previous year, at 268 pounds.

Lamb and mutton production, at 14.8 million pounds, was down 2 percent from February 2003. Sheep slaughter totaled 213,000 head, 6 percent below last year. The average live weight was 139 pounds, up 6 pounds from February a year ago.

January and February commercial red meat production was 7.1 billion pounds, down 6 percent from 2003. Accumulated beef production was down 12 percent from last year; veal was down 9 percent; pork was up 2 percent, and lamb and mutton production was down 3 percent.

Louisiana Grain Stocks

Corn stocks stored off-farm on March 1, 2004, at 14.5 million bushels, were up 1 percent from last year's 14.4 million bushels.

Sorghum stocks stored off-farm on March 1, 2004, at 1.60 million bushels, were down 43 percent from last year's 2.83 million bushels.

Soybean stocks stored off-farm on March 1, 2004, at 3.56 million bushels, were down 53 percent from last year's 7.58 million bushels.

All wheat stocks stored off-farm on March 1, 2004, at 5.75 million bushels, were up 9 percent from the 5.27 million bushels stored a year ago.

On-farm stocks for Louisiana were not published separately but were included in the United States total.

Louisiana and U.S. Grain Stocks, March 1, 2003-2004

| Item | Louisiana ¹ | | United States | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| | December 1 | | December 1 | |
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2003 | 2004 |
| | -----Thousand Bushels----- | | -----Thousand Bushels----- | |
| Corn | | | | |
| On-Farm | | | 2,940,000 | 3,030,000 |
| Off-Farm ² | <u>14,430</u> | <u>14,518</u> | <u>2,191,873</u> | <u>2,240,641</u> |
| TOTAL | | | 5,131,873 | 5,270,641 |
| Sorghum | | | | |
| On-Farm | | | 27,500 | 21,000 |
| Off-Farm ² | <u>2,832</u> | <u>1,601</u> | <u>135,423</u> | <u>137,652</u> |
| TOTAL | | | 162,923 | 158,652 |
| Soybeans | | | | |
| On-Farm | | | 636,500 | 355,900 |
| Off-Farm ² | <u>7,579</u> | <u>3,561</u> | <u>565,528</u> | <u>549,623</u> |
| TOTAL | | | 1,202,028 | 905,523 |
| All-Wheat | | | | |
| On-Farm | | | 236,300 | 257,890 |
| Off-Farm ² | <u>5,267</u> | <u>5,750</u> | <u>670,333</u> | <u>761,141</u> |
| TOTAL | | | 906,633 | 1,019,031 |

¹Louisiana on farm stocks and total stocks not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

²Includes stocks at mills, elevators, warehouses, terminals, and processors.

Louisiana Rice Stocks

| Date | On Farms or Farm Warehouses | In Mills and Attached Warehouses | In Warehouses not Attached To Mills | In Ports or in Transit | Total all Positions |
|------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| | (Domestic Units - 1,000 Cwt) | | | | |
| | <u>Rough Rice</u> | | | | |
| March 1, 2003 | 2,400 | 1/ | 1/ | 1/ | 8,608 |
| August 1, 2003 | 1/ | 1/ | 1/ | 1/ | 709 |
| December 1, 2003 | 5,400 | 1,106 | 5,257 | 753 | 12,516 |
| March 1, 2004 | 2,300 | 1/ | 3,197 | 1/ | 8,307 |

¹Included in unallocated to avoid disclosing individual operations.

Louisiana Rice Stocks

Rough rice stocks reported in all positions on March 1, 2004, totaled 8.31million cwt, down 3 percent from March 1, 2003. On-farm stocks of rice are estimated at 2.30 million cwt, down 4 percent from the previous year. The indicated December 2003 - February 2004 disappearance from all positions totaled 4.21 million cwt.

United States Rice Stocks

| Date | On Farms or Farm Warehouses | In Mills and Attached Warehouses | In Warehouses not Attached To Mills | In Ports or in Transit | Total all Positions |
|------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| | (Domestic Units - 1,000 Cwt) | | | | |
| | <u>Rough Rice</u> | | | | |
| March 1, 2003 | 27,505 | 11,869 | 61,514 | 1,690 | 102,578 |
| August 1, 2003 | 1,225 | 5,749 | 13,080 | 17 | 20,071 |
| December 1, 2003 | 43,165 | 13,295 | 77,989 | 870 | 135,319 |
| March 1, 2004 | 18,325 | 13,755 | 55,150 | 610 | 87,840 |
| | <u>Milled Rice</u> | | | | |
| March 1, 2003 | ---- | 4,494 | 110 | 2,023 | 6,627 |
| August 1, 2003 | ---- | 3,783 | 54 | 737 | 4,574 |
| December 1, 2003 | ---- | 4,859 | 118 | 1,639 | 6,616 |
| March 1, 2004 | ---- | 4,530 | 146 | 1,657 | 6,333 |

Prices Received Index Reaches Record High

The Preliminary All Farm Products Index of Prices Received by Farmers in March at 122, based on 1990-92=100, is 6 points above the February Index. This is the highest index level since records began in 1910. The Livestock Products Index increased 8 points from February while the All Crops Index increased 4 points. Producers received higher commodity prices for cattle, soybeans, milk and eggs. Lower prices were received for lettuce, strawberries, broccoli and asparagus. The seasonal change in the mix of commodities farmers sell, based on the past 3-year average, also affects the overall index. Increased average marketings of strawberries, asparagus, milk and broilers offset decreased marketings of cattle, cotton, corn and onions. The preliminary All Farm Products Index is up 23 points from March 2003.

The Food Commodities Index increased 7 points from last month to 123. The index stands 27 points above March 2003.

Prices Paid Index Up Slightly

The March Index of Prices Paid for Commodities and Services, Interest, Taxes, and Farm Wage Rates is 131 percent of the 1990-92 average. The index is up 1 point from February and 3 points above March 2003. Higher prices in March for feeder cattle, feed grains, diesel fuel and gasoline account for most of the index increase.

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Average Prices Received by Farmers: Louisiana and United States

| Item | Louisiana | | | United States | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| | Entire Month | | Preliminary | Entire Month | | Preliminary |
| | March 2003 | February 2004 | March 2004 ¹ | March 2003 | February 2004 | March 2004 ¹ |
| | -----Dollars----- | | | -----Dollars----- | | |
| Soybeans, per bushel | 2/ | 8.41 | 10.00 | 5.59 | 8.28 | 9.56 |
| Rice, per cwt | 4.06 | 8.65 | 8.98 | 4.31 | 7.74 | 7.72 |
| Upland Cotton, per pound | .466 | .625 | 3/ .627 | .486 | .627 | 3/ .618 |
| Hay, all, baled, per ton | n/a | n/a | n/a | 92.80 | 79.90 | 81.80 |
| Beef Cattle, per cwt | 48.10 | 57.20 | 58.40 | 72.60 | 78.50 | 84.00 |
| Steers & Heifers, per cwt | 74.30 | 88.40 | 93.00 | 76.70 | 82.30 | 88.60 |
| Cows, per cwt | 37.90 | 45.10 | 45.00 | 39.50 | 46.10 | 46.70 |
| Calves, per cwt | 88.80 | 105.00 | 107.00 | 96.70 | 111.00 | 114.00 |
| Broilers, live, per pound | n/a | n/a | n/a | .330 | .470 | .470 |
| Eggs All, per dozen | n/a | n/a | n/a | .687 | .875 | 1.090 |
| Milk All, per cwt ⁴ | n/a | n/a | n/a | 11.00 | 13.60 | 14.70 |

¹Mid-month

²Price not published to avoid disclosure of individual firms

³Based on sales during the first half of the month

⁴Before deductions for hauling and government withholdings. Includes bulk tank, quantity, and other premiums. Excludes hauling subsidies.

n/a = Not Available



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